



Evaluation of Training and Qualification Requirements of Animal Waste Technical Specialists

SL 2006-38



Background

- ◆ 2002 Farm Bill required NRCS to develop system to hire private contractors for technical assistance to landowners.
- ◆ NRCS requested PE board to identify conservation practices that are engineering as criteria for hiring private contractors.
- ◆ PE board identified more than 60 conservation practices as engineering.



Impacts – Technical Specialists

- ◆ Closure of Waste Impoundments
 - Approx. 1,100 inactive lagoons/holding ponds
 - More 4,600 active lagoons
 - Increased cost of closure with Professional Engineers



Impacts – District Technicians

- ◆ 110 District Technicians affected
- ◆ Job Approval Authority rescinded for 46 different conservation practices (Table 4).



Impacts – NC Agriculture Cost Share Program

- ◆ 116 District Technicians funded by NCACSP
- ◆ \$2,557,915 in state appropriations for TA.
- ◆ Added layer of review for practices.



1) Action

- ◆ Continue to provide technical services to clients.
- ◆ District technicians rely on Job Approval Authority of NRCS Employees



2) Actions

- ◆ Request PE Board to review determination on specific practices (Job Class I,II or III)



3) Recommendations

- ◆ Strengthen Division Engineering Staff
- ◆ Supports:
 - Ongoing Conservation Programs
 - Community Conservation Program



4) Recommendations

- ◆ Consider legislation to:
 - grant District employees job approval authority in accordance with existing NRCS Job Approval Authority Process
 - grant Animal Waste Technical Specialist authority for development of plans for closure of waste impoundments, except for design or installation of spillways if needed.